

January 26, 2005

TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE PEOPLE OF MISSOURI:

It is critical for the future of this state that we move Missouri in a new direction. We must move Missouri toward conscientious stewardship of the hard-earned tax dollars that Missourians send to their state capitol. The wisdom, energy, innovation, thrift, and commitment to service that are demonstrated by the citizens of this state must be reflected in their government. It is my greatest hope that this budget and enactment of meaningful legislation designed to strengthen our schools and foster job creation will chart a new course for our state – one of hope and prosperity for all.

The spending that this budget does define focuses on several key priorities:

- Increased funding for education. Missouri's Constitution declares that public education must be our first commitment. Even if we were not legally bound, we would be morally bound to serve the children of our state and the families who have placed their confidence in us. My budget reflects this commitment by increasing funding for education by \$170.6 million.
- Achieve a structural balance for state government. Past budgets have relied heavily on special one-time monies without addressing a deep structural imbalance that existed. This budget matches incoming state revenues with expenditures. This, the first of several significant steps toward restructuring state government, improves and solidifies Missouri's financial position.
- Foster economic development. If our state's revenue is to grow to meet our needs, then we must increase the number of quality employment opportunities for Missourians. Future budgets will rely upon economic growth. The budget also reflects my interest in developing nationally leading industries in numerous areas, including technology, biomedical research, life sciences, and renewable fuels.

The budget I submit to you is built around my belief that Missourians pay enough in taxes. I am opposed to increasing the tax burden imposed on the people of this state and my budget reflects that. Our state government must live within its means. This budget rededicates state government to the noble idea that it should function as an innovative, efficient, and conscientious servant of the people.

I am grateful for the confidence Missourians have placed in me and look forward to working with the General Assembly to enact my Fiscal Year 2006 budget and legislative initiatives.

Sincerely,

Matt Blunt